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Abstract

The literature on employers' and business organisations (EOs) has failed to analyse them as contentious organisations that apply identity-work as a power resource to mobilise resources and members. This article is based on a qualitative case study of Islamic EOs in Turkey. Developing a social movement model of EOs, I analyse the mechanisms through which identity-work with local religious collaborators facilitated collective action and political power. I find that the role of identity-work was three-fold: providing internal solidarity, securing external legitimacy, and supporting contentious institutional change by developing new policy ideas. This model can be applied more widely as EOs have increasingly shifted from traditional roles to take on social movement characteristics.

Introduction

In market economies with an institutionalised role for labour, a traditional process in the collective action of employers is negotiating with trade unions. However, as institutional support for collective bargaining has declined, employers' organisations (EO) have had to adapt and actively mobilise new members and resources to survive. Which tactics they use and how these lead to continued influence are important questions. The employment relations (ER) and HRM literatures either treat EOs as rational and functional organisations, or focus on how structural-institutional variables influence their success in mobilising and gaining political power. Studies in the corporatist tradition argue that strong organisational structures facilitate both EOs' policy support for strategic national political elites by efficiently controlling members, and member mobilisation by efficient interest aggregation (Behrens & Helfen, 2009; Schmitter & Streeck, 1999). More recent studies analyse EOs' new mix of activities and resources outside of collective bargaining, which appeal to employers' rational material and lobbying interests (Behrens & Traxler, 2004; Hornung-Draus, 2002; Sheldon, Nacamulli, Paoletti, & Morgan, 2016). Few studies examine an important tactic in employers' mobilisation toolkit– identity-work. Identity-work refers to the processes through which individuals or collectivities give meaning to themselves or to others (Schwalbe & Mason-Schrock, 1996, p. 115). Yet, it is through identity-work that employers make sense of their environment, and bind members together (Snow, 2004) around shared identities, values and goals (Snow & Benford, 1988) to provide the crucial legitimacy for their policy influence and rational material interests. This 'inadequacy' in the literature (Locke & Golden-Biddle, 1997) can be addressed by applying concepts from social movement theory to the study of EOs. Identity-work plays a key role in theories of social movement mobilisation (Cress & Snow, 2000, p. 1071).

Identity-work is increasingly relevant as new social movements in employment relations mobilising around collective identities like religion, gender or ethnicity have proliferated (Piore & Safford, 2006). In the UK, for example, new issue-specific employer forums collaborate with or were founded by identity-based movements and civil society organisations (Gooberman, Hauptmeier, & Heery, 2017; Heery, Abbott, & Williams, 2012). Business politics has experienced a religious revival in Latin American (Schneider 2004) as well as majority-Muslim countries like Indonesia (Hefner, 2011), and across the Middle East (Gerges, 2013).

In this article, I apply concepts from social movement theory to explain how identity-work can complement EOs' rational activities and lead to mobilisation and political power. It relies on a case study of the then two most influential Islamic EOs in Turkey, Müsiad (Independent Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association) and Tuskon (Turkey Industrialists' Confederation) from 1993 until 2013. The competition among EOs in Turkey has been part of a political struggle between broad Islamic and secular alliances. These Islamic EOs, with the support of the international Islamic movement, the Gülen community, played a crucial role in the gradual displacement of the traditional Kemalistⁱ political and economic elites (Turam, 2007), and the empowerment of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) (Hale & Özbudun, 2009). The Islamic coalition had been collaborating, applying identity-based social movement tactics from the early 1990s, when the first Islamic EO had been formed, until 2013, when the AKP began to resort to top-down control, and internal conflicts led to purges and even to Tuskon's closure. These tensions culminated in the attempted July 2016 coup, the consequences of which are beyond the focus of this study.

Islamic EOs developed shared collective identities and different types of ideas that they drew on in their collective action frames (Snow, Rochford, Worden, & Benford, 1986). These ideas included a new value system and policy framework as well as beliefs about

effective strategies to attain collective action goals. Goldstein and Keohane (1993, p. 9ff.) called these principled beliefs, foreground ideas and causal beliefs, respectively.

Established interest groups like EOs are traditionally differentiated from social movements; however this paper argues that EOs can be conceptualised as such if they engage in *indirect contention*. Typically, the concept of social movement is applied if there is some *informal and disruptive type of protest* directed at economic or political authority, such as Turkey's 2013 Gezi Park or the Arab Spring demonstrations. Organisational or purely market-based tactics, such as providing selective goods through lobbying or recruiting members do not qualify as disruptive; neither do 'contained' tactics such as creating new identities or values through identity-work. However, this article argues that this conceptualisation needs to be more nuanced since challenges to authority need not be direct or feature open protest to be effective. Islamic EOs aimed to disrupt Kemalist institutions through tactics that were *indirectly contentious* and were located outside of traditional employer collective action channels. Islamic EOs' framing of policy ideas and grievances, the development of shared identities, values, goals, and norms created a shared understanding and trust among diverse employers. Most importantly, Islamic EOs' identity-work was contentious and challenged authority, qualifying it as a social movement tactic and a power resource, since it fulfilled an important function in the process of institutional changeⁱⁱ. Introducing Islamic ideas into public debate and then normalising suppressed Islamic codes of behaviour, values, and norms and identities were essential first steps before resource-rich EOs could effect wider institutional change in the regulative context. Selective goods that fulfilled rational material interests of employers served wider public goals and were effective only because of Islamic EOs' framing. The frames employed by Islamic EOs were essential to give justification and legitimacy to the public and selective goods that they created.

Employers' organisations as social movements

The corporatist literature emerged to conceptualise tripartite concertation agreements (Baccaro, 2003; Lehmbruch, 1984; Streeck, 2006). These approaches focus on structural-institutional variables, namely the cooperation in national-level policymaking between organised interest groups and governments, as well as on the organisational structures that enabled such cooperation. The aggregation of business interests and the provision of market information through peak EOs to strategic national politicians was a key motivator of the European corporatism of the 1970s. In this stream of literature, centralised, encompassing, and hierarchical organisational capacities are regarded as essential power resources for efficient mobilisation and political influence (Behrens & Helfen, 2009; Schmitter & Streeck, 1999).

More recent studies analyse how EOs across Europe have adapted as collective bargaining and trade union power as institutional push-factors for employer collective action have declined. EOs in Germany and Denmark have been shown to depend more strongly on grassroots members' interests (Behrens, 2011; Hornung-Draus, 2002), and EOs in Italy and Australia have been shown to increasingly prioritise commercial over associational objectives (Sheldon et al., 2016). Likewise, EOs in Europe were found to increasingly focus on services, political lobbying and HR (Behrens & Traxler, 2004; Hornung-Draus, 2002). In short, EOs increasingly provide selective incentives for members' rational material interests. Rational actors in large, heterogeneous groups such as the mixed EOs of this study, which represent the interests of their members in both labour and product markets, face strong incentives for free-riding that make cooperation difficult (Olson, 1971). We would therefore expect strong selective incentives, in addition to public goods, to support EO mobilisation.

Social movement theory can provide a fruitful extension to better explain the variety and effectiveness of EO mobilisation strategies to the existing literature that either

conceptualises EOs as functional economic organisations or focuses on structural-institutional variables. The causal models found within social movement theory include a range of tactics and actors. Social movements are defined as ‘collectivities acting with some degree of organization and continuity *outside of institutional or organizational channels* for the purpose of *challenging or defending existing authority*, whether it is institutionally or culturally based, in the group, organization, society, culture, or world order of which they are a part’ (Snow, Soule, & Kriesi, 2004, p. 11). Social movement theory, although developed initially to explain mass protests in the 1960s as well as labour- and community-oriented movements in the West, has been widely applied to study Islamic mass movements at large (e.g. Burke III & Lapidus, 1988; Singerman, 2004; Yavuz, 2003). This article argues that EOs can be conceptualised as social movements if they fulfil the three key characteristics contained in the above definition: firstly, EOs need to go beyond an internal membership focus on selective goods and aim to *challenge* employment relations norms or institutions. In order to fulfil this criterion, the activities of EOs need to include activities that can be categorised as public goods. In Turkey, mobilisation occurred *outside of established channels* of business politics to include informal networks with civil society rather than formalised channels with power-holders, thus fulfilling a second criterion of social movement categorisation. Most importantly, this article argues that EOs can fit the definition of social movements provided that the latter is not limited to explicit and direct forms of contention, to include, what I call, ‘*indirect contention*’.

Protest can occur in many forms, and the social movement categorisation should include any means, as long as the ultimate goal and effect is explicit contention. Established interest groups like EOs are traditionally not conceptualised as social movements since they are legitimate political actors that use contained, institutionalised mobilisation tactics or focus exclusively on selective goods rather than explicit contention through direct disruption and

violence (Tarrow, 1998). Neither ‘symbolic and peaceful forms of disruption’ based on collaboration (Tarrow 2011, p. 102), including identity-work and challenging culture through religious practices, nor contained organisational practices, such as providing selective incentives, lobbying, collective bargaining or tripartite negotiations are generally classed as *contentious*. However, this article argues that EOs can be classed as social movements even if they do not engage in protest that can be conceptualised as directly violent or disruptive, but that ultimately aims at challenging authority and at explicit contention. This is in line more recent social movement literature suggests that movement mobilisation tactics range from contentious to non-contentious, and from attacking state or cultural authority through collaboration and/or confrontation (Bakker, Hond, King, & Weber, 2013). The mixed EOs in Turkey are ‘non-traditional’ movements insofar as they did not directly attack the state, but rather applied non-contentious tactics in the market and civic spheres, providing selective and public goods as well through identity-work in collaboration with religious civil society. Students of Islamic movements confirm that the Turkish case provides a curious combination of ideological and rational resources, and of contentious and non-contentious tactics (Tuğal, 2009; Turam, 2007; Yavuz, 2003), which ultimately, if not directly, aimed at long-term transformation of the state.

Framing is a mechanism in the struggle over ideas with the purpose of inspiring and legitimating the activities of social organisations. Snow and Benford (1988, p. 198) called framing the ‘politics of signification’. This signifying work develops interpretative schema that enable actors ‘to locate, perceive, identify and label’ social processes (Goffman, 1974, p. 21). Social groups play a central role in generating or challenging interpretative schemes through their mobilising speech. Effective identity-work constructed in frames has been found to fulfill three tasks – formulating a grievance and a collective identity; developing shared goals and specific strategies for the attainment of goals; and motivating collective

action (Cress & Snow, 2000; Snow & Benford, 1988; Snow et al., 1986). This process thus includes the development of different types of ideas: Firstly, a new *policy paradigm*, also dubbed '*foreground ideas*' with specifics goals to be achieved. A policy paradigm privileges certain actions over others shaping actors' self-understanding of their own interest and goals and providing ways to sway public opinion. Secondly, '*causal beliefs*' (Goldstein & Keohane, 1993, p. 10) about cause-effect relationships, define grievances and specific strategies for how such a policy paradigm can be achieved. Both of these types of ideas are grounded in normative '*principled beliefs*', which help 'actors judge how the world ought to be and provide them with a moral compass' (Hauptmeier & Heery, 2014, p. 2475). Principled beliefs strongly motivate collective action. In addition to these types of ideas, effective framing involves uniting actors around *collective identities*, i.e. self-ascribed characteristics, vis-à-vis other actors.

Islamic EOs have developed such principled and causal beliefs in their publicity and activities. As a result, EO members have developed significant commonalities in their understanding and interpretation of the situation, a shared goal of gaining a seat at the bargaining table, a contentious identity vis-à-vis secular elites, and a normative attachment to new tactics, all embedded in a wider shared value system. A shared value system does not only gather members around shared models for action (Hall & Taylor, 1996), providing *solidarity and trust* by organising experiences (Turner, 1983), but it provides new ideas as *weapons to influence public opinion* (Hauptmeier & Heery, 2014).

It also enhances *legitimacy*, which has been shown to be an important mechanism resulting from effective identity-work (Cress & Snow, 2000, p. 1100). Increased legitimacy promotes mobilisation by securing sympathetic allies and official political support. The role of professional organisations (Farndale & Brewster, 2005), and CSOs (Williams, Abbott, &

Heery, 2011) in legitimacy-creation has been acknowledged in multiple ER studies and is also crucial for private EOs to influence public policy (Schmitter & Streeck, 1999).

Employers' organisations in Turkey

EOs in Turkey are divided along politico-ideological lines (Buğra, 1998), with separate organizations existing for secular and Islamic employers. A further distinction can be drawn between 'mixed' EOs, that represent both labour market and product market interests of member employers, and traditional employers' associations that focus on collective industrial relations. The main organization in Turkey that deals with the latter is TISK (Turkish Employers' Confederation), an umbrella confederation of sectoral EOs. Employers can join both the TISK affiliates and the mixed EOs. The focus of the research presented below is on the latter, because these EOs represent a larger number of employers and employees and have been more successful in shaping the public policy and political agenda (Yeşilbağ, 2015).

Until the 1970s, employers' organisation had been limited to compulsory membership of state-controlled Chambers of Industry and Commerce. The first EO – Tüsiad (Turkey Industrialists' and Businessmen's Association), was established in 1971 as the owners of large holding companies grew more independent of the state. Tüsiad represents the large and secular employers, which were nurtured by the Kemalist elites in the Istanbul-Marmara region (Pamuk, 2012). Its membership comprises a small, albeit economically powerful section of employers; about 600 members representing 2,500 firms in 2011. Further information on the EO-case studies can be found in Table 1 below.

While the state promoted top-down industrialisation investing into large firms, SMEs, especially in remote and underdeveloped central-and southeast Anatolia had little access to investment funds and other privileges. Instead, Anatolian employers took advantage of the step-wise economic liberalisation of the 1980s, and had initially relied on informal grassroots networks and a pattern of pooling private resources. The Islamic movement successfully mobilised these SMEs, and they became the backbone of the Islamic movement. Its various

factions organised in the powerful EO Müsiad (with close ties to the AKP), and later in the confederation Tuskon, which had close ties to the Gülen movement until its closure in 2016.

The Gülen movement, which is centred around the preacher Fethullah Gülen, embodies a socio-economic and moderate branch of Islam. An international, informal network of education and business networks in media, health and trade provided its financial resources (Aga, 2004). Tuskon was the movement's business arm; founded in 2005 by gathering existing local associations under one roof. By 2012 it represented 33,260 employers. There has been an 'extensive purge of all Gülen linked groups since 17 December 2013' (Özcan & Gündüz, 2015, p. 23). The Gülen community was declared a terrorist organisation in Turkey in October 2015, and individuals, organisations, and corporations suspected of being affiliated to the movement have been imprisoned, purged and closed down since the attempted coup of July 16th 2016.

The combined industrial output of Islamic EOs remains smaller than that of the secular Tüsiad. Tüsiad contributed 65% of industrial production, whereas Müsiad contributed 15% of Turkey's GDP in 2012. The majority of Müsiad firms were micro-firms in the 1990s, yet Islamic capital has shown significant growth benefitting from the growing power of the AKP (Özcan & Gündüz, 2015, p. 22). Additionally, Islamic EOs represented a wider variety of employers and employed a larger number of employees (Eligür, 2010, p. 203).

Membership³ and branch growth figures illustrate the immense mobilising potential of Islamic EOs. Müsiad's membership began with only 136 employers in 1991. In the 2011–2012 period, Müsiad had 4,900 members, representing more than 15,000 companies.

Compared to the secular Tüsiad's two branches across Turkey, Müsiad features representational offices in 31 of Turkey's provinces (2012 data). In contrast, the secular Tüsiad has no branches outside of Istanbul and Ankara. Locally, the membership of the secular EO in Gaziantep doubled between 1993 and 2012, but remained below the overall

rate of firm growth. In contrast, one additional Islamic EO joined Tuskon and the second Tuskon-affiliate almost quintupled its membership.

Methods and Design

Turkey has been chosen for this study as it represents a ‘deviant’ (Lijphart, 1971) case that is poorly explained by existing EO theories, and that provides a successful example of identity-based employer mobilisation through social movement tactics. Findings are based on 51 semi-structured interviews in Gaziantep’s textile cluster conducted between 2010 and 2012 covering the time from 1993, when the first Islamic EOs were formed in Gaziantep, to 2012. Additional documents that were used in the research include the brochures and homepages of EOs and local companies, as well as articles in newspapers and magazines. Interviewees included employers and representatives of both EOs and public institutions, alongside further external experts from research institutions. All materials were analysed via a hybrid approach to thematic analysis (Attride-Stirling, 2001). The hybrid approach allows for themes to be created both inductively, generalising from codes to more global themes, and deductively from theoretical concepts of EOs and social movements (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005).

Gaziantep is one of the most successful new industrial growth centres in Turkey, where the dominant secular EO and political parties have lost the competition for political power with more influential Islamic EOs and parties. At the time of the study, Gaziantep had three Islamic EOs and one secular EO. In addition to a local Müsiad branch, there were two affiliates or members of the confederation Tuskon: Gapiad (‘Gaziantep Sharing Young Businessmen’s Association’), and Hürsiad (‘Independent Industrialists’ and Businessmen’s Association’). Another, Gagiad (‘Gaziantep Young Businessmen’s Association’), represents the elitist, secular businesspeople of the region. According to the association’s information, Gagiad’s members represented ca. 75% of Gaziantep’s economy. In many respects, this organisation is similar to Tüsiad. The two local members of the secular EO Tüsiad were

interviewed as well. None of the organisations provide detailed information on their membership, and no external databases on membership are available.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

Interviewees were selected from the textile-manufacturing cluster in Gaziantep. EOs in Turkey aim to organise powerful industrial companies, and therefore non-industrial companies were excluded. Gaziantep's textile cluster is among the internationally most competitive and is the largest in Turkey (Kunt & Zobu, 2011). It includes the textiles, clothing, apparel, leather, footwear, and complementary plastics industries (Öz, 2004). Although there are differences between industries, the membership mobilisation of Islamic EOs took place across all of these industries. Limiting the sample to organisations with the same types of production requirements and services enhances comparability and reduces extraneous sources of variation and measurement error (Becker & Gerhart, 1996, p. 792).

Interviewees were chosen to represent a large variety of politico-religious views and affiliations among owner-managers, leaders and representatives from all EOs and relevant public institutions (see Table A1 in Appendix). They were placed into the following categories on the basis of the evidence gathered: Islamic leaders and Islamic businessmen; strategic political entrepreneurs who joined pro-business political parties in addition to EOs at opportune times; strategic businessmen, who joined different EOs depending on the incumbent government; and secular businessmen who had never joined any Islamic groups. Industry and coalition leaders were identified with the help of local experts from the Chambers and the EOs. Representatives from public institutions, relevant academics, and 'outsiders' were added to the sample for triangulation. Further snowball sampling was employed until saturation (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) of the material was reached. EOs did not

provide information on the company sizes of their membership, but compared to the overall textile industry in Gaziantep, the sample is skewed toward larger industrial firms, some of which are among the top 1000 in Turkey. EO leaders stressed that it is exactly these larger firms they aim to mobilise. All interviews were conducted based on anonymity, in the Turkish language, and subsequently transcribed verbatim.

Findings

1a) Identity-Work: New foreground ideas and principled beliefs

Müsiad's publication 'Homo Islamicus' (*Homo Islamicus*, 1994), is a key publication of Islamic EOs, which continues to shape their actions and beliefs. The 'Homo Islamicus' contained a principled beliefs system and foreground ideas developing a rational and capitalist Islamic value system. Müsiad leadership asserted: 'The capitalist system (...) adversely affects the world economy and people. It needs to change. Our culture and religion (...) can change it.' (Şahin, 2009). To this end, Islamic EOs aimed to develop 'laws with divine origins' rooted in Islam for Muslim countries and companies. Islamic capitalism was to be based on cooperation, community, and morality rather than competition and rationality. Philanthropy as well as voluntary and patriarchal labour relations were favoured over regulated tax, welfare and industrial relations systems. The state was limited to providing infrastructure for a free market economy, while a system of voluntary '*zekat*' (alms) was to care for the poor. Instead of focusing on self-interested profit-maximisation, Muslims were told to maximise '*felâh*'—salvation and happiness in the present and afterlife. Therefore, paying alms, for example, was not be regarded as interrupting economic efficiency, but as investment into the afterlife. On the basis of this value system, more specific causal beliefs around means-ends relationships and strategies as well as collective identities were developed, which will be discussed in the next section.

1b) Identity-work: Collective identity, causal beliefs (grievances, goals, and strategies), and legitimacy

Müsiad leadership described their Islamic EO as a ‘pressure group’ rather than a service organisation. Most interviewees regarded Islamic EOs’ collective action as political and contentious, challenging state authority. The key *grievance* voiced by Anatolian businesspeople was the active exclusion of Anatolian SMEs by secular elites from negotiating tables and economic resources for ideological reasons. The Constitution following the military coup of 1980 restricted associational activity and Islamic groups: it had crushed the left and labour movement, and made formal ties between political and Islamic organisations illegal. Several Müsiad leaders were briefly imprisoned in 1997 alongside the current President Erdogan for using Islam in their speeches and attacking the state. This feeling of grievance was echoed in many employers’ statements, and resonated with and united them around deeply felt exclusion and anger against a ‘secular elite’. The head of Gaziantep’s most influential company stressed this exclusion and differentiation in a newspaper interview:

In the past, Tüsiad appeared to be appropriate for Istanbul capital only. (...) Anatolian businessmen didn’t use to become members because they were small- and medium-sized. (...) Now they keep inviting us, but we don’t want to join anymore. (...). Membership is not a matter of persuasion; it’s a matter of principle. (Kadak, 2010).

This grievance extended to a feeling amongst the broader Islamic population that they were excluded in Turkish society, politics and public life more widely. Erol Yazar, one of Müsiad’s prominent founders, similarly argued that an ‘elitist’ Tüsiad discriminated against ‘hardworking, pious’ Islamic employers (Şahin, 2009). He used the terms ‘Black vs. White Turk’. This juxtaposed Anatolian or ‘Black Turks’, depicting them as Islamic, dark-skinned with Arab origins, with ‘White Turks’, depicting the urban and Western-oriented Republican elite as a group with a fair skin-tone. This statement amplified a sharp distinction between

institutions regarded as Kemalist and urban-elitist, and a pious group of supposedly rural ‘underdogs’ as opposing *collective identities*. Moreover, Müsiad strongly stressed Islam in its identity, as illustrated by statements from its leadership:

Müsiad is an ideological association. (...) It’s not an association that was just founded to make money. We have a mission and a vision. (...) Our key strategy is to promote an Islamic identity and to translate that into business life. This principle is expressed in our motto: High morality, high technology. (...) We need to internalise moral values to produce high technology. (interview 8)

Employers regarded EOs as representing different political factions. In Islamic EOs, employers came together based on religiosity and a shared worldview:

All of these employers’ organisations’ (...) understandings are quite different: Müsiad, for example, is religious, it accepts moral people as members. Müsiad members won’t drink alcohol, so they have a different world view from [the secular] Gagiad. It’s people with similar views who will want to get together. (interview 23)

The *collective goal* of Islamic EOs, here exemplified in Müsiad’s vision, was aimed at increasing the social mobility, political representation and influence of pious Anatolian elites:

Müsiad gathered Anatolian SMEs under its roof and opened them to the world. We developed a bourgeois class. My father was among the founders of Tüsiad (...). I saw in my family that we could unite religion and worldly affairs. But in society these two sides were strangers to each other. So much that when we organised Müsiad’s first congress in a five-star hotel, our friends said ‘what business do we have here?!’ They had forgotten that they were the foundation, they had accepted their marginalisation, and they felt like they had become Turkey’s Blacks. (...) They had control mechanisms that are like those used in a zoo. In Turkey, religion has always been kept under control. (Şahin, 2009)

The Müsiad leadership asserts that ‘Müsiad was founded with the belief that such an idea [of the Homo Islamicus] can only grow through institutional structures’ (Şahin, 2009).

Nevertheless, Islamic employers remained cautious about directly and clearly stating their goal as transforming Turkey’s secular institutions. Major *strategies* developed were, firstly, to organise pious Anatolian SMEs and to promote their cooperation, as well as their access to the structures and positions of political power to foster a new economic elite and achieve legitimate political representation. Secondly, Islamic employers were encouraged to

follow the practices discussed below that stretched from their roles within business and as employers to the civic sphere to support ‘the just cause’.

Contributions to public and selective goods were presented as a religious and national duty, as essential for eternal peace and worldly economic success alike. Islamic principled beliefs supported and legitimised their money-making. Islam provided an explanation of why hard work and entrepreneurship were important qualities. Pious behaviours in the private and civic realms, e.g. religious fasting or charitable work, were regarded as a prerequisite for economic success. A pious employer stated:

If a person lives according to the right principles, then he’ll find peace. Everything is connected. (...) Religion is the language of love, of beauty, if you have it, then you are beautiful, if you don’t have it, there’s nothing. (...) (interview 23)

We do this to fulfil God’s will. Everything turns out well for a good person; you will also do your work well. (...) These activities are not against the state, we want the state to take possession of them. Our ‘*hoca efendi*’ [referring to cleric Fethullah Gülen] wants it this way (...). Apart from education, we provide social help to the poor. We go to poor neighbourhoods and distribute food every day to almost 1000 people, to the needy, the ill (...). (interview 22)

Thereby, they situated ‘themselves among the faithful, devoted to just causes and beyond the realm of economic interests’ (Buğra & Savaşkan, 2011). Islamic EOs did indeed take on quasi-public functions by administrating education and welfare programs through public funds. Islamic employers paid alms (donating 1/40th of company’s profit), contributed to the Gülen community’s educational efforts, and took part several times a week in religious meetings. Both EOs and their member-employers gained major *legitimacy* by promoting themselves as providers of public goods by sponsoring highly visible institutions and naming schools, hospitals, and mosques after themselves.

2) Trust and solidarity

EOs facilitated cooperation simply by providing a platform for like-minded employers to meet, which was crucial for then marginalised Islamic actors. EOs and the religious community functioned as important bridges between employers, creating trust and closeness

based on similarity and repeated transactions. A secular employer explained how pious employers had gradually transformed the sense of community generated in multifunctional religious community ties into trade ties and economic cooperation. For example, at two Islamic EOs, members established cooperative, multi-ownership companies, and they offered fellow-members preferential rates for their products.

EOs applied stringent membership selection procedures, investigating companies' business and employer credentials to facilitate inter-firm trust. Potential members were required to exhibit a set of behaviours and norms that matched the Islamic movement's views of a pious (Sunni) Islamic capitalist. In Islamic EOs, beyond business credentials, additional checks were made into ideological orientation: the membership forms of Tuskon-affiliates included questions on political orientations, and which charities and religious leaders were being followed and supported. Islamic EOs also investigated 'individuals' strength of faith' (interview 21), and the conduct of employers' and their families' private lives. Consequently, the pool of employers given access to resources was limited to those supporting this branch of the Islamic movement. A shared value system based on Islam created solidarity and incentives for exchanging selective goods and resources, which are analysed in more detail below.

3) Material goods: Selective Goods

EO membership provided a range of important material selective goods and services for members. Firstly, Islamic EOs liaised with *financial* institutions, getting preferential deals from public banks or the Gülen community's Bank Asya. Bank Asya had grown to be among Turkey's largest banks with the support of AKP elites (Rodeheffer, 2013) before its recent purge and bankruptcy. Hürsiad additionally offered certain legal services for free. This provision allegedly saved some large Gaziantep firms from bankruptcy. Members could

acquire loans more easily and faster if key elites vouched for their creditworthiness. Through such ties, loan conditions were improved, too, providing lower interest rates, or longer repayment periods.

Secondly, *preferential information* served as another key selective good. Such preferential information was exchanged during religious meetings, EO or other club dinners among political, business, and civic leaders. Participation in these activities resulted in preferential treatment of movement-affiliates through political party ties as members profited from tailor-made and faster information and bureaucratic processing. Access to key gatekeepers and information provided advantages in dealings with public organisations and involving politicians, e.g. in lobbying, winning public tenders and funding, or in gaining export licences.

Thirdly, Islamic EO's *trade promotion* was one of their key draws for members to join. The Islamic confederation, Tuskon's international network of branches extended all over the world. It had five official international branches, but the large network of Gülen schools also served as informal contact points. Both provided basic services, information on markets, and organised business meetings. These contact points directly benefited trade since the community bought 'goods for its big network of followers, who ran firms, hospitals, media outlets, newspapers, TV and radio stations, and supermarket chains' (interview 34). For example, Kaynak Holding, a company formed to supply Gülen schools, became Turkey's largest supplier of educational materials at the time of the study (Rodeheffer, 2013).

Islamic EOs also invested heavily into popular trade fairs exclusive to their members, which provided important opportunities to meet potential international collaborators, subcontractors or customers, and to catch-up on current trends. A turnover of 25 billion US dollars had been generated at Tuskon's trade fairs between 2006 and 2011, and dozens of Gaziantep firms regularly participated. The Islamic EO, Müsiad, mainly promoted trade by

connecting provincial employers with political elites through high-profile international trips. Islamic EOs also created sophisticated e-services to promote trade and cooperation among members nationally and internationally, and especially Tuskon's version generated serious profits for members. Finding customers and business partners who are trustworthy, and acquiring information about international marketplaces, were important selective goods for employers.

Finally, beyond such benign trade promotion, *patronage networks* that go beyond information- and service- provision were common. The resources of local administrations and the privatisation of public services had been stepped up since the AKP's rise, increasing the availability of local public rents (Özcan, 2006). New, more flexible public institutions operating at the local level, e.g. the infamous TOKI (Housing Development Administration), were founded or altered seemingly to support patronage exchanges. Many large employers acquired favourable business deals facilitated through their religious ties. These extended to building plots, privatisation deals, infrastructure projects secured through the TOKI, public tenders, or favourable legislation (Rodeheffer, 2013).

4) Employment practices

Islamic EOs promoted specific types of employment policies and actions. The secular EO Tüsiad has increasingly forged relationships with trade unions (Akan, 2011). In comparison, Islamic EOs were strongly anti-union and hostile toward formal labour relations (Duran & Yildirim, 2005). Erol Yazar of Müsiad was prominently quoted telling a representative of the Islamic trade union, Hak-İş, that the Prophet asserted that 'a good worker is one who obeys employers' (Duran & Yildirim 2005, p. 238 ff.). Müsiad's 'Homo Islamicus' argued for cooperative, paternalistic and informal employee relations replacing and suppressing trade unions. This is perhaps surprising, given that one might expect a social partnership between Islamic EOs and Hak-İş, the labour wing of the same political Islamist movement from which

Müsiad and the AKP had emerged. However, the Islamic movement has excluded labour interests (Duran & Yildirim, 2005). Instead, shared religious feelings have been exploited to prevent unionisation. Even where Hak-İş successfully organised, relations remain hostile with violent anti-unionisation strategies and examples of workers going on hunger strikes (e.g. at Yimpaş, a large Islamic food company). An affiliate of Hak-İş in textiles went on a 132 day-long strike at one of Erol Yazar's companies. Locally, employers did not regard unions as influential and perceived unionisation in Gaziantep and the Anatolian region to be very low. The local leader of an Islamic EO, for example, explained he opened a new, non-unionised plant to which he would move his operations in order to avoid the textile union already organised in one of his other plants.

This paternalism and the hostility of Islamic EOs to unions translated into workplace relations where cooperation, harmony and lifelong loyalty were expected from workers. Workers were constructed as family members with the owner-manager as head of the family. The influence of Islamic values was evident in workplace practices. For example, morale among employees and business contacts was to be increased by organising pilgrimage tours and Islamic employers were expected to provide prayer rooms for employees, and to organise work around prayer and fasting times. A major international carpet producer and strategic employer in the region got a bad reputation for allegedly not allowing its employees to fulfil their religious duty of prayer five times a day. Consequently, a prayer room was provided, and the Friday prayer became advertised on the company's homepage.

Islamic EOs fulfilled important HR functions at the workplace level in training and recruitment. In contrast, the local secular EO had no such explicit policies or actions. For example, Gapgiad used state funds to run courses to train administrative personnel, graphic designers, or to improve computer skills, all of which were very popular amongst member employers. Hürsiad even had a private classroom in its branch offices. Several businessmen

confirmed that they took part in EO training courses and found these indispensable. Islamic EO members also used Gülen school networks to find talented graduates to develop a compliant, devout workforce. In the words of one employer, recruiting from within the Islamic network helped ‘to create a different kind of team spirit (...) they become a group’ (interview 25). Islamic EOs value system thus had substantial influence on members’ employment practices.

Conclusion

This article has performed three tasks. It has analysed the identity-work of Islamic EOs, identified the resources these EOs create to advance the interests of their members and examined the consequences of Islamic identity for the conduct of employment relations. To sum up, Islamic EOs developed a system of principled beliefs and a policy paradigm grounded in a rational, capitalist, socio-economic type of Islam (Yavuz, 2003). On the basis of this value system, Islamic EOs developed identity-, and market-based strategies to garner political influence and legitimacy. These strategies encompassed organising and creating trust by forming EOs and cooperating with religious civil society; developing selective resources and political networks to form a rival Islamic business elite; and contributing to public goods to increase legitimacy. Islamic EOs and employers engaged in harsh anti-union and paternalistic employment and management practices that emphasised Islamic values. Islamic EOs generated selective material goods, engaged in lobbying, patronage networks, and even rent-seeking to mobilise members and resources. These rational material activities were framed as religious and national duty. This framing, together with Islamic EOs’ civic activities enhanced their legitimacy.

Other recent studies of EOs which focus on the tactics that lead to successful mobilisation stress the part played by activities and resources that appeal to employers’ rational material and lobbying interests (Behrens & Traxler, 2004; Hornung-Draus, 2002;

Sheldon et al., 2016). The present study develops an alternative and neglected mobilisation process among employers – identity-work. It has been shown that the activities of Islamic EOs' fulfilled employers' rational interests by providing strong selective incentives, but also served a wider, collective and public goal: improving the political representation, influence, and legitimacy of a previously marginalised group. The attainment of this goal, moreover, was shown to depend on identity-work that both generated a collective Islamic identity amongst employers and supported the provision of selective goods. Rational, material interests were important, but subordinated to larger contentious public goal of challenging authority and to promote Islamic values and institutions. Therefore, EOs' resource-generation and identity-work qualify as movement tactics, rather than solely as economic services to members or political services for rational politicians.

Identity-work and purely symbolic challenges to authority are traditionally not conceptualised as contentious social movement tactics; neither are established organisational tactics such as lobbying or providing selective incentives. To be categorised as social movement, mobilisation needs to include examples of explicitly contentious strategies, in addition to their taking place outside of organised institutional channels with the aim of providing a contentious public good. This article develops a novel argument: EOs, even if they do not mobilise explicitly contentious protest can still be analysed as social movements as long as definitions of the latter are not limited to direct means of contention, but include 'quiet' forms of protest. Identity-work and resource-generation, although not directly violent or disruptive, can *indirectly* challenge and disrupt authority in a two-stage process. Islamic EOs first had to change accepted values and religious practices and create a new, legitimate business elite by providing selective goods rather than attacking state institutions directly. Only after introducing new ideas into public debate, normalising Islamic values and norms, while at the same time mobilising resource-rich and cohesive members united around shared

and legitimate ideas, could identity-work lead to wider contentious institutional change. By mobilising members, resources, and changing cultural practices and values through identity-work, Islamic EOs indirectly challenged the Turkish state. The newly legitimised normative institutions partly supplanted the existing Kemalist institutional framework in employment and business practices, but also in education and welfare more widely (Buğra & Savaşkan, 2014).

This article contributes to literature by applying social movement theory to EOs, an exercise that has not been performed previously. The presented social movement model combines political, material, and ideological variables in explaining the mobilisation power of EOs. Such an approach can better capture our understanding of the wide range of processes and structures (Schneiberg & Lounsbury, 2008) that EOs apply.

Arguably, *indirect* contention is particularly relevant for EOs, which unlike other movements of workers or other subordinate groups have greater structural power. Politicians and political parties have a rational interest in collaborating with employers who provide jobs for the electorate and can make large contributions to the public purse. Employers have easier access to political elites, in addition to their greater material resources, both of which make the explicitly disruptive tactics of traditional social movements redundant.

Identity-work is especially important when the legitimacy enshrined in institutional arrangements breaks down or does not exist in the first place. As shared policy goals and channels vis-à-vis employees break down as push factors for employer collective action, EOs have to develop alternative mobilisation strategies to continue their influence. While material selective incentives have been widely studied, this study has shown that identity-work can be a powerful tool for mobilising new members and alternative resources, not just for traditional social movements, but for employers, too. The approach adopted here is relevant to multiple countries where EOs with movement characteristics have emerged. Future research could

compare country-cases and tease out which conditions are necessary for them to emerge in the first place, and to be as successful in the long run as in Turkey.

Appendix

INSERT TABLE A1 HERE

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Tables and Figures

Table 1: Employers' organisations by ideological orientation (2012 data)

Employers' Organisations	Membership³ (Unit: Employer–Businessperson)	Branches
Tüsiad (1971–) <i>Secular</i>	600 members representing 2500 companies -Large industrial companies -Gaziantep: 2 known members	Istanbul (HQ) and Ankara; 5 international
Gagiad (1993–), Gaziantep <i>Secular</i>	209 members Affiliated with confederation Tügik (ca. 7000 members across Turkey) - Large industrial companies - Profit threshold for membership - Up to 45 years of age, then honorary membership	Gaziantep Tügik: 8 regional federations; 55 EOs across Turkey
Müsiad (1990–) <i>Islamic</i> EO with close ties to the AKP Müsiad Gaziantep (1993–)	Turkey: 4900 members, representing 15,000 companies 226 members - Mix of SMEs, industrial companies, and professionals	31 in Turkey; '94 contact points in 44 countries'
Tuskon (2005–2016) <i>Islamic</i> EO associated with Gülen Movement Gaziantep affiliates: Hürsiad (1993–2016) Gapgiad (2002–2016)	33,260 members across Turkey Hürsiad, Gaziantep - 476 members - 95% of members SMEs; 5% large industrial companies and professionals Gapgiad, Gaziantep - 101 members - Large manufacturing companies and professionals - Up to 45 years of age, then honorary membership	7 regional federations; 160 EOs across Turkey; 5 international branches and further unofficial 'partner organisations in 140 countries'

Table A1: Interviewees' characteristics

Interviewee no.	Role	Company Size (2012)*	Politico-Religious Views
1	Hürsiad representative	n/a	Islamic Leadership
2	Hürsiad leadership Owner-manager	2	Islamic Leadership
3	Gapgiad representative	n/a	Islamic Leadership
4	Gapgiad leadership Owner-manager	4	Islamic Leadership
5	Gagiad representative	n/a	Secular Leadership
6	Gagiad leadership	Not textile	Secular Leadership
7	Müsiad Gaziantep leadership	Not textile	Islamic Leadership
8	Müsiad co-founder	Not textile	Islamic Leadership
9	Müsiad HQ representative	n/a	Islamic Leadership
10	Municipality employee	n/a	Public Institution
11	City Council representative Owner-manager	1	Strategic Political Entrepreneur
12	Kosgeb representative	n/a	Public Institution
13	Development Agency representative	n/a	Public Institution
14–16	Local academics	n/a	Public Institution
17	Local teacher	n/a	Public Institution
18	Owner-manager	3	Islamic Employer
19	Owner-manager	3	Islamic Employer
20	Top-level employee	3	Islamic Employer
21	Owner-manager 1	2	Islamic Employer
22	Owner-managers 2 and 3		
23	Owner-manager	2	Islamic Employer
24	Owner-manager	4	Strategic Political Entrepreneur
25	Owner-manager	3	Strategic Political Entrepreneur
26	Owner-manager	3	Strategic Employer
27	Top-level manager	3	Strategic Employer
28	Top-level manager	2	Strategic Employer
29	Owner-manager	3	Strategic Employer
30	Owner-manager	2	Strategic Employer
31	Owner-manager	4	Strategic Employer
32	Owner-manager	2	Secular Employer
33	Owner-manager	2	Secular Employer
34	Owner-manager; Co-founder secular EO	1	Secular Employer
35	Top-level manager	Not textile	Secular Employer
36	Owner-manager	Not textile	Secular Employer

* Based on number of employees; Sources: Gaziantep Chamber of Industry, interviews and company homepages; Small firms (1): <49 employees; Medium firms (2): 50–249 employees; Large firms (3): 250–999 employees; Very large firms (4): 1000+ employees

Endnotes

ⁱ Turkey's early state ideology is Kemalism. In Kemalist secularism, the state actively controls religion and confines it to the private sphere (Kuru (2006, p. 137). I refer to such actors and institutions as secular that signal their support for Kemalist secularism, whereas I refer to such actors as Islamic that signal their support for the restructuring Kemalist secularism and/or seeking greater Islamisation in the public, social and cultural spheres.

ⁱⁱ Institutions are broadly defined to include not only 'hard' institutions, i.e. formal rules and procedures, but also the norms, 'symbol systems, cognitive scripts and moral templates that provide frames of meaning guiding human action'. (Hall & Taylor, 1996, p. 947)

³ The membership unit is the employer-businessperson (owner-managers, managers, and in Müsiad, as well as some Tuskon-affiliates, professionals) rather than the firm. Multiple employer-businesspersons from one firm can become members, and each member may have multiple firms. Therefore, the number of firms is far larger than the number of members.